Northern Messenger

Christmas Number

BOTH SATISFIED.

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CHRISTMAS GREETINGS.

Messenger friends, our Christmas wishes to all have this year so far overrun our space that we have had to make our paper half as big again to hold them all. Never before have we been able at one time to give you so many good things, and by the time Christmastide is over we expect to have you show almost as much satisfaction with your surroundings as the quaint little pair on the first page. "Oh," we sometimes think "if only our holidays could last forever!" But they never do; work clamoring for our attention is always at our elbow, and sooner or later we must turn to it. What kind is waiting for you? Have you any special plans ahead for this winter? Of course you have, but a few more, we are sure, will not come amiss. They will only help you the better to carry out the rest.

One that we are specially interested in, along with people young and old in every county, town and village in Canada is set forth on the last page. How many of you are going to join this band of young historians? Every boy and girl in Canada we hope. Last year one thousand one hundred and ninety-seven boys and girls sent us stories of Canadian history, and we hope that four or five times as many more will do it this year. The inducements offered are greater even than before, the Canada prize being worth four times as much as that won last year.

And now just a word about our circulation. Of course every reader wants that increased, and we wish again to thank all those who have worked so faithfully to this end. For special inducements to continue this we would refer you to the back of the supplement. We do not think we are mistaken and we are sure no one will accuse us of boasting when we say that we believe the *Northern Messenger* to be, as we aim to make it, the best paper of the kind in Canada. From one school, in writing a few days ago for a renewal of a club of fifty which was dropped last December, we have this testimony:

"We have had your paper in our school heretofore and all seemed disappointed when we made the change." H. FORD.
Milton, Queen's County, N.S.

How it is regarded by many in far away lands you have already seen. Thanking our friends again for all their help in the past we send our Christmas number to all near and far with our best wishes for

A MERRY, MERRY CHRISTMAS.

TAKE THE ANTIDOTE.

Some persons seem impelled to read every infidel publication that comes in their way, cherishing a false notion that they are shutting their eyes to the truth, or at least to candid investigation, if they refuse to receive spiritual poison as well as spiritual food in their minds. Others, in these days of cheap print and free libraries and abundant books, imbibe the poison of infidel views before they fairly know that it is poison. To all such we should say: Take the antidote. Go out into the open air. Take the simplest flower in your hand, pull it to pieces, see the arrangement of petal and corolla and stamen and calyx; then look at the hand which pulls the flower to pieces; notice its wonderful joints, the flexible adaptations by which it takes hold of the minutest leaf, the admirable arrangement of all those many bones; then think of the eye which beholds the flower that you pick to pieces; consider its lenses, its muscles, its retina, that minute picture gallery which we carry about with us. Then from the eye let the thought pass upward to the brain which tells the eye to see and the hand to pluck, and which announces to the senses that the flower is beautiful. If any one is steeped in atheism he can scarcely take one tiny flower in his hand without crying out; "There is a God."

It is an old story which is related of the sceptic, Hume, that after spending a whole day in his study writing a treatise to prove the non-existence of God, he stepped out on the balcony of his house with his friend, Andrew Fuller. It was just after nightfall, and through the sweet summer air the light of ten thousand stars came twinkling down. The sceptic could convince himself in his study that there was no God, but under the stars it was a different matter; for, grasping his friend's arm, he pointed up at the heavens and cried out: "O Andrew, there is a God, there is a God." Such involuntary confessions are worth a hundred labored testimonies, for they are interpreted and reinforced by the unbidden cry of every soul that is open to the truth when brought into contact with the work of the Creator. The exclamation of conviction is coming from every candid soul, "There is a God!" "There is a God!"—*Golden Rule.*

CHRISTMAS.

Oh, Master, comest thou to me again?
And I unmoved! How many times before
Have thy sad footsteps faltered at my door,
Or paused beside my sheltered window pane?

How many times? God knoweth. Oft there came
The Man of Sorrows. What had I with him?
And then the Comforter. Mine eyes were dim
With multiplying tears. He called my name

More soft than June wind, and more tenderly,
Then said my soul, "There is no comfort but
Forgetfulness." And so the door was shut.
"Come not again, I have no need of thee."

And often triumphed o'er by doubt, when none
Were near to aid, I saw the Counsellor;
Beneath his touch I felt my weak heart stir;
Then sigh, "Lord, not Thy will but mine be done."

Alas! alas! the joyous Christmas bells,
That sound so merrily in others' ears,
But open up the plain of bygone years,
Through which the stream of mem'ry falls or swells.

Sometimes when bruised and broken by the length
Of a fierce war with sin, whose lovely face
Yearned longingly to my withheld embrace,
I conquered—yes—but was it my own strength

That saved me? That sure strength on which I lean?
Or did the Saviour stand beside me there?
To him I gave no thanks, I made no prayer,
And yet the weight of the unknown, unseen

Is heavy on me. What of Heaven's bliss
Would we not give for one touch of his hand?
What faith for just the power to understand?
What joy for His own garments' hem to kiss?

Oh, heav'nly Child, who comes so oft in vain,
Year after year with gifts of love and peace,
Break our hard hearts, and bid our doubtings cease,
And make us little children once again.
—*Ethelwyn Wetherald in The Week.*

"PEACE ON EARTH! GOOD WILL TO MEN."

BY MARY D. BRINE.

Ere the old year descends his throne,
And lays his crown aside,
A holy Festival he keeps,—
The joyous Christmas-tide.
And far and near the bells we hear,
Throughout the Christian land,
Ringing the tidings which all hearts
Should know and understand.

O happy Christmas-tide, which helps
Us feel how near and dear
To human lives, and human hearts,
Though life be bright, or drear,
The blessed Saviour loves to be,
And bids us trust his love,
E'en though all crowned with majesty,
He reigns in heaven above.

O are there hearts where strife has lain?
Or lives by malice marred?
Have there been words and deeds unkind?
Are tender memories scarred?
Then harken to the Christmas bells!
What message do they give?—
'Tis "Peace on earth! Good will to men!"
And by it men should live.

Dear Lord, with close of Christmas-tide,
The dear old year must die!
What record, Saviour of mankind,
Must go to Thee on high?
Forgive the past, let peace unite
All hearts in truth and love,
The while the Christmas cheer shall teach
Thy message from above.

HAVE YOU A MOTHER?

Have you a mother? If so, honor and love her. If she is aged, do all in your power to cheer her declining years. Her hair may have bleached, her eyes may have dimmed, her brow may contain deep and unsightly furrows, her cheeks may be sunken; but you should never forget the holy love and tender care she has had for you. In years gone by she has kissed away from your cheek the troubled tear; she has soothed and petted you when all else appeared against you; she has watched over and nursed you with a tender care known only to a mother; she has sympathized with you in adversity; she has been proud of your success. You may be despised by all around you, yet that loving mother stands as an apologist for all your shortcomings. With all that disinterested affection, would it not be ungrateful in you if in her declining years you failed to reciprocate her love and honor her as your best, tried friend? We have no respect for a man or woman who neglects an aged mother. If you have a mother, love her, and do all in your power to make her happy.—*Christian at Work.*

SCHOLARS' NOTES.

(From International Question Book.)

LESSON XIII.—DECEMBER 29.

REVIEW.

GOLDEN TEXT.

And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither: and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

DAILY READINGS.

M. Prov. 23:1-35.
T. Isa. 5:1-25.
W. 1 Cor. 3:9-27.
Th. Prov. 20:1-30.
F. Dan. 1:1-21.
Sa. Prov. 24:1-34.
Su. Rom. 6:1-23.

PERIOD.—Eighty years B.C. 1055 to 975.
PLACE.—Palestine, centering around Jerusalem.
PROPHETS.—Samuel, Nathan, Ahijah, Gad.
KINGS.—David and Solomon.

QUESTIONS.

KING DAVID.

I. EARLY LIFE.—When and where was David born? His parents? His duties? His appearance? What feats of strength and skill did he perform? How was he introduced into Saul's court? Where and how did he spend the rest of his life till he was thirty years old?

II. THE SOLDIER.—What qualities did David show as a soldier? Name some of his battles and victories. Was he ever defeated? How did he organize his army? (1 Chron. 27.)

III. THE KING.—When was David made king? At what age? How long was his reign? In what two capitals? When was he made king over all Israel? How far did his kingdom extend? What was the state of the kingdom under him? What were his qualities as a king?

IV. THE POET.—What poems did David write? Was he the first great writer of hymns? For what use were many of the Psalms prepared? How can hymns written so long ago be helpful to us?

V. VARIED EXPERIENCES.—What were some of David's great trials in his early life? Did these grow out of his own faults? How did they work out good for him? What were some of the trials of his later life? Were these the fruit of his sins? Was his life on the whole a happy and successful life? How old was he when he died?

VI. RELIGIOUS LIFE.—What was the general character of David's religious life? Was he faultless? Was his on the whole a good, and noble, and sincerely religious life? What does God say of him? (1 Kings 15:5.) What did he do when he had fallen into sin? What does this show? What do you find in him to avoid? What to imitate?

KING SOLOMON.

I. EARLY LIFE.—When and where was Solomon born? The names of his father and mother? How old was he when he became king?

II. HIS WISDOM.—What great choice did he make? What is said of his wisdom? In what ways did he show it?

III. HIS KINGDOM.—Trace out on the map the extent of Solomon's kingdom. (1 Kings 4:20, 21; 2 Chron. 9:26.) What promise was fulfilled in this? (Gen. 15:18-21.) What do you know of its riches? its commerce? its power? its glory? Describe the visit of the Queen of Sheba.

IV. THE TEMPLE.—What was the great event of his reign? Give some description of the Temple. For what did Solomon pray in reference to it?

V. HIS WRITINGS.—What books of the Bible did Solomon write? What else did he write? What is the character of the Proverbs? What can you tell about the Book of Ecclesiastes?

VI. HIS FALL.—What led Solomon into sin? Into what sin did he fall? What sad consequences followed?

VII. CLOSE OF HIS LIFE.—How long did he reign? In what year did he die? At what age? Why was not the promise of long life fulfilled? What do you find in his life and character to imitate? What to avoid?

FIRST QUARTER.

STUDIES IN LUKE.

LESSON I.—JANUARY 5.

THE FORERUNNER ANNOUNCED.—Luke 1: 5-17.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me."—Mal. 3: 1.

HOME READINGS.

M. Luke 1:1-22.—The Forerunner Announced.
T. Mal. 3:1-18.—The Forerunner Foretold.
W. Phil. 2:1-18.—"Blameless and Harmless."
Th. Psalm. 141:1-10.—Prayer as Incense.
F. Heb. 1:1-14.—Ministering Spirits.
S. Num. 6:1-8.—The Law of the Nazarite.
S. 1 Kings 18:21-46.—The Work of Elijah.

LESSON PLAN.

I. The Childless Pair, vs. 5-7.
II. The Joyful Announcement, vs. 8-14.
III. The Honored Messenger, vs. 15-17.

TIME.—B. C. 6, toward the end of the reign of Herod the Great, *king of Judea*; Augustus Cæsar, emperor of Rome.

PLACE.—Jerusalem, in the temple.

NOTE.—Our Saviour was born B.C. 4, or four years before the date from which we number our years A.D. (Anno Domini, the year of our Lord). If this mistake had not been made many centuries ago, the present year would have been A. D. 1891.

OPENING WORDS.

Luke begins his Gospel with a brief introduction (vs. 1-4), in which he gives his reason for writing and the sources upon which he had drawn for information. Then follows in the remainder of this first chapter a record of facts preceding and connected with the birth of Jesus which is found only in this Gospel. Our lesson to-day tells us of the parents of John the Baptist, and of the annunciation to them that they should have a son who would be the forerunner of the promised Messiah for whose coming the world was waiting.

HELP IN STUDYING THE LESSON.

V. 5. *Herod.*—Herod the Great, the founder of the Herod family. *Course of Abia*—one of the twenty-four classes into which the priests were divided, 1 Chron. 24:1, 4, 10. V. 6. *Righteousness before God*—in a righteous state as God saw them. *Walking*—habitually living. *Commandments*—moral precepts. *Ordinances*—rites and customs appointed by God. *Blameless*—without fault. V. 7. *Well stricken in years*—quite old. V. 8. *Before God*—at God's altar in the temple. V. 9. *His lot*—his appointed service, as arranged among the priests. *Incense*—a compound of sweet-smelling gums for burning. (See Ex. 30: 1-10; Num. 16:1-40.) *The temple*—here the holy place. V. 10. *Without*—in the temple-courts. V. 11. *An angel*—a heavenly messenger sent from God. V. 13. *Thy prayer*—for a son, and for the coming of the Messiah. *Is heard*—with favor, and shall be answered. V. 15. *Drink neither wine*—a Nazarite specially set apart to God's service. (See Num. 6:1-4.) *Filled with the Holy Ghost*—made holy and guided by him. V. 16. *Shall he turn*—cause to forsake their sins. V. 17. *Before him*—before the Messiah. *Elias*—Elijah. *To turn the hearts*—to heal family dissensions. *Prepared*—ready to receive the Messiah.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—Who wrote this Gospel? What do you know about him? What other book in the New Testament did he write? Title of this lesson? Golden Text? Lesson Plan? Time? Place? Memory verses?

I. THE CHILDLESS PAIR. vs. 5-7. Who was Zacharias? Meaning of the course of Abia? From whom was Elizabeth descended? What was the character of this pair? What was lacking in their home?

II. THE JOYFUL ANNOUNCEMENT. vs. 8-14. What duty was assigned to Zacharias as a priest? Where was the incense burned? Where were the people during this service? What were they doing? Who appeared to Zacharias? How did the sight affect him? What joyful announcement did the angel make? What name was Zacharias to give his son? What should his birth bring to his parents? What to others?

III. THE HONORED MESSENGER. vs. 15-17.—What was this son to be in the sight of the Lord? What was foretold concerning his manner of life? What special blessing would be his? What would be the result of his preaching? Before whom would he go?

WHAT HAVE I LEARNED?

1. That there have always been good people in the world even in the most wicked times.
2. That we should seek to be blameless and pure in all our life.
3. That God sends his angels to comfort his people and minister to them.
4. That God both hears and answers prayer.
5. That while Christ our High Priest offers intercession for us within, we should be praying without.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW.

1. Who was Zacharias? Ans. A priest in the time of Herod the Great.
2. What was his character? Ans. He was righteous before God.
3. Who appeared to Zacharias in the temple? Ans. An angel of the Lord.
4. What did the angel promise him? Ans. A son who should be a prophet.
5. Who was this son? Ans. John the Baptist the forerunner of the Messiah.

LESSON CALENDAR.

(Fourth Quarter.)

1. Oct. 6. The tribes united under David 2 Sam. 5:1-12.
2. Oct. 13. The Ark brought to Zion. 2 Sam. 6:1-12.
3. Oct. 20. David's Thanksgiving Prayer. 2 Sam. 7:18-29.
4. Oct. 27. Sin, Forgiveness, and Peace. Ps. 32:1-11.
5. Nov. 3. David's Rebellious Son. 2 Sam. 15: 1-12.
6. Nov. 10. David's Grief for Absalom. 2 Sam. 18:18-33.
7. Nov. 17. David's Last Words. 2 Sam. 23: 1-7.
8. Nov. 24. Solomon's Wise Choice. 1 Kings 3: 5-15.
9. Dec. 1. The Temple dedicated. 1 Kings 8: 51-63.
10. Dec. 8. Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. 1 Kings 10:1-13.
11. Dec. 15. Solomon's Fall. 1 Kings 11:4-13.
12. Dec. 22. Close of Solomon's Reign. 1 Kings 11:26-43.
13. **Dec. 29. Review and Temperance. Prov. 23:29-35.**

THE HOUSEHOLD.

A CHRISTMAS PIE.

A Christmas pie afforded much amusement at a family party. Most of the gifts had been given in the morning, but one for each person present had been reserved for this dish, which was in the shape of a large old-fashioned pie, though really not a pie at all.

The presents, which were all small—one was a ring, one a locket, another a bit of old lace, a third a five dollar gold piece to purchase some books a certain boy felt were necessary to complete his happiness—were done up in small packages, tied with ribbon, and covered up in the fine white sand with which the bowl was filled. The sand was rounded up on top, hiding the packages, and was decorated with a wreath of green around the edge, and a sprig of holly stuck in the centre.

It was passed around the table, and each person allowed to put in his fingers and draw out one package. Each package had on it the name of the person for whom it was intended, and as few, if any, drew their own, there was considerable passing over of gayly tied packages, which added to the fun.

Another Christmas pie, which looks exactly like a real pie, and gives no evidence that it contains anything more than a pie should, is made by lining a large dish with a thick crust made without shortening. After the under crust is placed in the dish, it is filled with cotton, or anything that will keep up the upper crust, which is then put over the top, but not fastened to the lower one at the edges. After the crust is baked, the top is lifted off, the gifts placed in the pie, the top laid on again, and a twist of dough laid around the edge to hold the two crusts together. The whole is then set in the oven just long enough to harden the twist, but not long enough to heat the pie through. The pie is then taken out of the dish, and sent to its destination, with a message that it is not to be cut until brought on the table at the Christmas dinner.

A pretty arrangement is to line the pie with tin-foil, and place above that a layer of damp cotton, on which are arranged choice cut flowers.—*Ex.*

HINTS FOR THE WORK TABLE.

A unique bangle-board is made of a pretty ear of pop-corn. Gild the ear, screw in four or five brass hooks, and at each end fasten a bow of narrow yellow ribbon on a chain, for hanging.

A gift highly appreciated by gentlemen is a pen-cleaner of the following description: Procure a fancy Majolica vase, about three inches in height and 1½ inches in diameter; fill with No. 4 shot. This is excellent for cleaning pens, always ready for use, convenient and neat.

Nothing seems to give children so much pleasure as the little stuffed animals. A four-cornered tent of unbleached muslin tacked on to a board is easily made. Then make a menagerie consisting of a couple of elephants, a brown and a black dog, a white pig, grey and white rabbits and grey and white mice. These animals are all very easily made from Butterick's patterns and will prove a priceless treasure to the little ones, affording them many hours of intense amusement. A beautiful pincushion is made of satin ribbons in the shape of a sack. Get a yard and a half of pink and of blue, or of gold and of red No. 7 satin ribbon. Divide each ribbon into four pieces. Feather-stitch these together, alternating colors, on to a foundation lining of muslin. Fringe the ribbons at the top, about two inches deep; fill the bag with sawdust or bran, and tie with No. 3 ribbons to match. A flat bag made in the same manner, lined with cotton sheeting, and perfumed with "potpourri" or rose leaves, makes a delightful "sachet" for an easy chair.

AN EFFECTIVE MANTEL LAMBREQUIN.

The dimensions are dependent on the size of the mantel to be covered. For one of ordinary length the plain piece should be about twelve inches in depth, and reach from one end to the middle of the mantel. The draped piece should be about two inches shorter and about six inches wider, so that when it is draped the bow will be a short distance beyond the middle of the mantel. The top piece is a sash the width of the mantel, and sufficiently long to hang over each end about two inches deeper than the corresponding front piece.

The simplicity of this model makes it available for any material that can be used for the purpose, rich as well as simple. A very handsome one can be made of plush and satin, the plain piece and sash of satin, and the draped portion of plush in bronze, dark blue, dark green or red, the same color throughout; the difference in the texture of the material will cause an apparent difference in shade. On the satin embroider or applique a spray of flowers in a contrasting color, and have the color of the material and the principal color in the flowers repeated in the fringe and bow.

Felt, cloth, flannel, colored canton flannel, cretonne, or even chintz, could be made after this design, and simple trimmings used in keeping with the material selected.

AN ALLOWANCE FOR CHILDREN.

If children have no money of their own, how can they learn to manage it? Begin when they are very young, and teach them gradually the use of money, by arranging household work so they can earn a few pennies, and perhaps by giving moneyed rewards for special excellence in school. Whenever children are given money let them understand it is because they have earned it by good behavior. Money should not be doled out to a child as it were to a beggar. It has a right to its allowance; and children that are early taught that they must furnish equivalent for money received learn the value of money, and grow to be respected because they are self-respecting. The plan we have suggested is followed in many families, and each child is paid a fixed sum for certain duties. While the sums earned by smaller children are trivial, the children are compelled to pay out certain small necessary expenses from them, and to contribute a penny of the earnings to the church contribution-box each Sunday. As soon as they have a dollar saved they are urged to put it in the bank, unless it is near a birthday or the holidays, when extraordinary expenditures are in order. In one family, the writer remembers it, it is the rule of the mother to make a liberal allowance of paper, pencils and other sundries for school, and if any of these articles are wasted or used up before a certain time, the child in fault is compelled to purchase others from its own money, a very definite and usually effective way of reaching carelessness. By gradually becoming used to spending money, and learning by "paying" the suffering and folly of carelessness, the child grows to learn values, and when she arrives at an age suitable may use an allowance given her, wisely and with proper discretion.

HOW TO PREVENT COLDS.

The phrase "taking cold" is not found in standard medical works. Physicians regard it as inexact and, therefore, unscientific. By general use and common consent, however, it has become a part of our language.

People in all walks of life, and in all climes, take cold. Those who live at a high altitude in the West Indies, where the mercury varies but ten degrees in the year, feel a change of two degrees as much as we do a variation of ten times as many.

Anything which impairs the nutrition of the body, the nervous system, or the circulation of the blood renders us more susceptible to the influences which produce colds.

First, then, one should see that his diet, exercise, clothing and general habits are such as will keep the bodily health and strength up to the highest possible standard.

Given the susceptibility, there are three ways in which people most often take cold; by allowing draughts of cold air to strike the back of the neck, by getting the feet cold or wet, and by becoming suddenly chilled when heated either from exercise or from sitting in a close, warm room.

A doctor in Paris, recognizing these facts, proposes to render the nerves of the neck and feet less sensitive to sudden changes of temperature, by blowing cool air on them, and then colder and still colder air day by day, till they can stand air of a very low temperature without discomfort or injury.

But this method has the disadvantanage of requiring expensive apparatus. The same beneficial results may be obtained by a much simpler process. Pour rock-salt, or, still better, sea-salt, into a two-quart fruit jar till it is half full. Fill the jar with water. Let it stand in your bedroom for twenty-four hours, shaking it a few times, and you will have a strong brine in the jar above the salt.

Pour a pint of this brine into a bowl, and bathe the throat and neck thoroughly with it, wiping with a towel. Now follow by rubbing hard with a piece of very coarse flannel till the skin glows. Serve the feet in the same way. Repeat this night and morning, and you will very soon find that you are less liable than before to take cold.

Add water each time after you have used from the jar, so as to have a quantity of brine in it continually. A person whose circulation is very inactive should bathe the neck and feet in hot water first, then follow with the cold brine and the rubbing.

If one will follow the above directions, and protect himself properly, especially his feet, when going out into the open air, he will rarely or never take cold from the first two causes we have named.—*Youths' Companion.*

WOOD STAINS.

Dissolved asphaltum in spirits of turpentine makes a good brown stain for coarse woodwork. Half a pound of oak-bark and the same quantity of walnut-shells, boiled in half a gallon of water, is an excellent improver of cheap rosewood as well as for staining butternut and black-walnut. For staining wood in imitation of mahogany use water, one gallon; madder, eight ounces; fustic, four ounces. Boil and apply, while hot, with a brush. A decoction of logwood chips may be used for the same purpose and then give a coat of shellac varnish. Or, boil half a pound of logwood in three pints of water until the color is extracted, then add one ounce of salt of tartar. Apply when hot. For imitation ebony take red cherry or any similar hard and fine-grained wood and wash three or four times—allowing it to dry between each application—with a strong decoction of logwood. Then wash with a solution of acetate of iron, which is made by dissolving fine iron-filings in strong vinegar. The surface of the wood must be rubbed down and polished before varnish is applied.—*American Agriculturist.*

RECIPES.

CRANBERRY SAUCE.—There is a wide difference between cranberry sauce and cranberry jelly. For the former pick over a quart of the best berries and put them in a porcelain kettle with a pint of boiling water. As soon as they begin to "pop,"—keeping the kettle covered meanwhile—take from the fire, press through a colander and stir in while hot one pound of granulated sugar.

PUMPKIN PIE.—The secret of the excellence of the old-fashioned pumpkin pie lies in the fact that plenty of eggs and the richest milk was used. They were made very sweet with molasses alone, and the only spice used was ginger. The modern cook destroys the natural flavor of the pumpkin with all the spices and condiments that would go to flavor, and rightly too, a mince pie, but which in pumpkin pie are quite out of place.

COCOANUT MOLASSES BARS.—Cut half a small cocoanut into very fine shavings; you should have about a pint of these shavings. Spread these shavings on tin dishes, and stand in a warm place for one or two hours. Make the toffy precisely the same as Everton toffy, adding to the sugar and butter, when you first put it over the fire, one tablespoonful of glycerine. As soon as it reaches the "crack" degree, add the cocoanut and turn it on greased pans to cool. When cool mark it into bars.

ROAST SPARERIB.—Cover the meat with a greased brown paper until about half done, then remove, and dredge with flour. It must be basted frequently. About ten minutes before it is done, sprinkle fine bread crumbs seasoned with powdered sage, pepper, salt, and a very finely minced onion, over the surface. Baste once during the ten minutes that it must remain in the oven. Lift out the meat to a hot dish, free the gravy from fat, thicken with browned flour, season to taste, and send to the table in a gravy boat.

HOARHOUND TOFFY.—Put a half-ounce of dried hoarhound leaves into one gill of boiling water, cover and stand aside for one hour, then strain and squeeze through a cheese cloth. Put the extract thus obtained and one pound of brown sugar in a granite saucepan, add, if necessary, two or three tablespoonfuls of water, stir until the sugar is dissolved, add a tablespoonful of lemon juice or vinegar, and boil without stirring until brittle when dropped in cold water. Pour into greased, square pans, and, when partly cold, mark with a greased knife into tiny squares.

EVERTON TOFFY.—Put three ounces of butter into a bowl of ice-water. Wash the hands with warm water and soap, rinse but do not wipe them. This prevents the butter from sticking to the hands. Now work the butter under the water until it is rather elastic, then shake the water off, put the butter in a granite saucepan and when melted add a pound of brown sugar, and boil over a good fire until it reaches the "crack" degree. That is, when it hardens in cold water and will not stick to the teeth. Begin to try after it has boiled ten minutes. When done, turn into greased pans and stand away to cool. When partly cold, mark into squares, with a greased knife. When cold, break the squares apart and wrap each in waxed paper.

BAKED CHICKEN-PIE.—Take six chickens and joint as for a friessed. Put them over the fire with thin slices of salt pork, half a pound in all, and barely cover with cold water. Bring quickly to a boil, and draw to the side of the fire where they will just simmer. When tender roll out your crust about a quarter of an inch thick, and line a large tin or earthen dish; lay in the chicken with butter and seasoning between each layer; put on the top crust, but add no juice until the pie is done. Then through the hole in the top, using a funnel, pour the juice, properly thickened and seasoned, until the pie is full. This pie is delicious hot or cold. There is no soaked crust, and the gravy turns to jelly when cold. It is a famous standby for the larder at holiday seasons.

ALMOND TOFFY LOZENGES.—Shell one pound of almonds, blanch them, put them in the oven until dry and very slightly brown, then chop them rather fine. Wash four ounces of butter as directed in Everton toffy, put it in a granite saucepan and when melted add a pound of brown sugar. Boil over a good fire until it is brittle when dropped in cold water. From this moment watch it most carefully and continue boiling until you observe a slight scorched odor, then take it instantly from the fire, add the almonds and turn the mixture into greased shallow pans to cool. When partly cold, mark into squares with a greased knife, or they are much prettier if stamped into round or oblong lozenges. A small, sharp, tin cutter will answer for this purpose. Peanuts may be used in the place of almonds.

ORANGES WITH JELLY.—This is a very pretty modern invention for decorating the holiday dinner table. It is just as good to eat as it is to look at. Take large, fine oranges and cut a small round piece from the stem end, then with your finger or a small bone mustard spoon, gradually loosen the skin from the pulp, drawing the latter out through the opening. Lay the skins in cold water until wanted. Make an orange jelly with the juice of the oranges and enough lemon juice to give the right flavor; drain the skins, fill with the jelly, stand them on little egg or custard cups, if necessary to keep them upright, and stand away until cold and firm. Then cut into halves and arrange on a dish with some pretty green leaves. In making the jelly be careful to get it firm enough. The rule is, the juice of four or five oranges two quarts of water, a package of gelatine and a pound and a half of sugar. Put the gelatine to soak with orange juice instead of cold water, then add the sugar, the balance in boiling water, and as much lemon juice as you need.

PUZZLES—NO. 25.

SQUARES.

(No. 1.) 1. To burn the surface. 2. Blue. 3. Pertaining to the country. 4. A migrating fowl. 5. A girl's name.
R. H. JENKYNS.

(No. 2.) 1. Separately. 2. That which puzzles. 3. To one side. 4. A kind of rampart. 5. To run.
R. H. JENKYNS.

(No. 3.) 1. A festival. 2. Wood to bind stakes. 3. Farewell. 4. Appears. 5. Reliance.
R. H. JENKYNS.

(No. 4.) 1. A nick. 2. A kind of clay. 3. To pitch. 4. An old woman. 5. Chopped.
R. H. JENKYNS.

PI.

Rhgtae oy smolsobs heliw oy yma.
Dol meit si lltis a gnfiyl
Nda hist maes weorfl chiwh loisms ot-yad
Ot rowrom liwl ob guidy.

BIBLE ENIGMA.

I'm in south, east and west,
I'm in live, love and rest,
I'm in fen, fern and den,
I'm in keel kirk and ken,
I'm in youth, year and day,
I'm in judge, queen and bey,
I'm in night, some and more,
I'm in seek, save and store.
HANNAH E. GREENE.

NUMERICAL ENIGMA.

My 2, 11, 12, 1, is a man's name,
My 5, 4, 7, 8, is a part of a plant,
My 13, 10, 3, 12, is a kind of dress,
My 15, 16, 14, 6, is a part of the face,
My 9, 2, 5, 12, is a weed,
My whole is a proverb of Solomon.
HANNAH E. GREENE.

ANSWERS TO PUZZLES.—NUMBER 24.

ENIGMA.—"Believe in the Lord."—II Chron. 20: 20.

SQUARE.—

A D A R
D A M E
A M E N
R E N T

PI No. 1.—A foolish son is a grief to his father, and bitterness to her that bare him.—Prov. 17: 25.

PI No. 2.

One by one thy duties wait thee;
Let thy whole strength go to each;
Let no future dreams elate thee
Learn thou first what these can teach.

BIBLE ACROSTIC.—

E	-zr-	A — Ezra 7, 12.
N	-chusht-	A — II Kings 24, 8.
O	-phi-	R — I Kings 9, 28.
C	-air-	O
H	-ama-	N — Esther 7, 10.

Enoch, Gen. 5, 21. Aaron, Ex. 28th. chap.

PUZZLERS HEARD FROM.

Answers to puzzles have been received from James Reid, Hannah E. Greene, Harry Jakeway, Andrew A. Scott.

The Family Circle.

ON THE TRACK OF CHRISTMAS.

BY MARGARET E. SANGSTER.

A nineteenth century child! Did you ever think what that means, little Robin and Ruby? You live in the time of the telegraph, the telephone, and the typewriter, the railway and the ocean steamer, and I don't know what else that saves minutes and muscles. How your little great-grandmothers in their day would have stared if they had been told of half the fairy-like wonders which are every-day and commonplace and matters of course to you. Why, even Christmas has grown to be lovelier and brighter in these days than it ever was before. It was a dream of delight to me in my childhood, but it has gained some charms since then, and every year it comes with new beauty and added enchantment.

"Merry Christmas!" The sweet words have a music all their own, the sweeter that everybody is saying them, and they are popping from lips which are often pursed up and crusty, as well as from those which are always smiling and bland. The cook wishes the milkman a "Merry Christmas," the mistress wishes it to the maid, the merchant says "Merry Christmas" to his customer, and, in fact, we all wish it. Like jolly Bob Cratchit and Tiny Tim, the thought in our hearts is not "Merry Christmas" only, but "God bless us every one!"

There were thousands of years during which the earth waited for Christmas. There were sowing and reaping, winter and summer, and the years with their changes rolled round, but no Christmas came with its songs and gifts and its great gladness, until the angels brought the first good news of its advent.

BABY'S FIRST CHRISTMAS MORNING.

I like to think of the Wise Men—whom tradition tells us were three kings of the East—Melchior, Gaspar, and Balthasar, journeying slowly through the desert day after day, and following the wonderful star, until at last it stood still over the manger where the infant Jesus lay. They brought gifts to him, gold, frankincense, and myrrh, and he was himself God's gift to mankind. So you see that giving is bound into the very fibre of Christmas.

Better even than to think of the Eastern princes is it to recall the shepherds watching their flocks by night on the Judean hill-side, when, as they talked together to keep themselves alert and wakeful, the glory of God shone round about them, and they were sore afraid.

And there, right above them, hovered a mighty angel, majestic and serene, who told them to "fear not," because this very day a Saviour is born in the city of David. Suddenly through the opening skies issues a host of the seraphim, praising God and singing—singing such a strain as the earth had never heard before—and when the last sweet echo dies away the angels go back into heaven.

Then the shepherds, in the gray dawn, take their reverent journey to Bethlehem to find the young Child and his mother.

At the period of our Saviour's birth the world was ready for him in a peculiar way. For a long time there had been war and fighting everywhere, but now there was profound peace.

The great empires of Assyria, Persia, and Greece had passed away, one after the other, and the magnificent empire of Rome had succeeded them. The whole known world was under the sway of the Seven-hilled City. Augustus Cæsar was the supreme ruler of the world. Every nation paid him tribute; the Roman eagles had conquered all who opposed them.

When people are at war there is little time for learning or art or commerce to flourish. It is only when peace prevails that there is time for these things. Although Rome was despotic, yet in her vast provinces she allowed a good deal of liberty, and altogether there had never been an era so fit for the coming of the Prince of Peace as the golden age of Augustus.

It was in the middle of the fourth century that Christmas was first observed as a festival. From Rome it passed over into Asia, and as years elapsed it was kept in Europe. One of the last places where Christmas was greeted with anthems and processions, strange to say, was Jerusalem, although Christian worship began there.

During the Middle Ages there sprang up in the track of Christmas what we have all read about as the institution of chivalry.

There was a time when nobody's life was safe anywhere. People had to surround their castles and homes with deep ditches, and then keep warders on their drawbridges by night and by day lest assassins should find their way into the hall or chamber. Bold barons, and bands of robbers and marauders went roistering up and down the land, and there was nothing but riot and turmoil and plunder going on, the rule being the right of the strongest, and only that. A very, very bad rule!

With the sweet spirit brought into the world by Jesus there grew up reverence for woman, a desire to protect the weak, and a resolve on the part of the nobles to set wrongs right if they could.

So the order of knighthood came into being, and through the forest and over the mountains and into the cities rode the goodly knights, sworn to deliver all who were in peril, and to scorn every mean action.

The mother of the pure and lofty Bayard said to him, when he received his sword, "Serve God, and he will aid thee; be sweet and courteous to every gentleman in divesting thyself of all pride. Be not a flatterer or tale-bearer, be loyal in word and in deed, keep thy word, be helpful to the poor and orphan, and God will reward it to thee."

Can the gentlemen of to-day adopt a better code of morals and manners?

When gradually the gloom of the Dark Ages passed, and the invention of printing came, so that books were multiplied instead of being slowly copied out by hand, the track of Christmas grew wider and plainer.

In the pleasant homes of Germany the Christ-child was lovingly remembered, and the Christmas tree was lit by numbers of candles, and strung with shining balls, and hung with presents. Then came the pleasant fiction of the good St. Nicholas with his laden pack, his jingling bells, and his galloping reindeer.

English children, Dutch, Spanish, French, Norwegian, and Danish children are all in wild spirits when Christmas comes. Perhaps children on this continent are a wee bit wilder than any of the others. The stockings are hung up in the chimney corner, and with hearts full of delight the little folk go to bed, sternly determined to stay awake all night.

Strangely enough, no child ever has stayed awake all night, and no boy or girl has ever beheld the face of Santa Claus, or ever heard the prancing of his fleet-footed steeds, except in dreams. But that he is real, and that he comes some time between the dark and the daybreak, your stockings crammed with gifts testify.

Dear children, amid the pleasure of the season, I beg you not to forget the gladness which lies at the heart of Christmas. It was sung by the angels. It was brought by the Lord himself when he became a little child.

The track of Christmas is ever gaining breadth and taking to itself new glory. Christmas is kept in islands of the ocean which a little while ago were occupied by cannibals. To-day the islanders are Christians.

India, China, Japan, Syria, Africa, are joining the multitude who worship the Saviour born in Bethlehem. Wherever there are idols, and wherever there are misery, want, and sin, the true religion is slowly but surely making its way. And before many years shall have gone, Christmas will be kept the wide world round. The twentieth-century child may see that happy time when all tongues and nations shall say "Merry Christmas!"

THE CHEERFUL FACE.

Next to the sunlight of heaven is the cheerful face. There is no mistaking it—the bright eye, the unclouded brow, the sunny smile, all tell of that which dwells within. One glance at this face lifts us out of the mists and shadows into the beautiful realm of hope. One cheerful face in the household will keep everything warm and light within. It may be a very plain face, but its cheery smile sends the blood dancing through the veins for very joy. Ah, there is a world of magic in the plain, cheerful face, and we would not exchange it for all the soulless beauty that ever graced the fairest form on earth. —*Union Signal.*

WHAT CAN I DO TO-DAY?

"What can I do to-day?
Not praise to win, or glory to attain;
Not gold, or ease, or power, or love to gain,
Or pleasure gay;
But to impart
Joy to some stricken heart.
To send a heaven-born ray
Of hope, some sad, despairing
Soul to cheer—
To lift some weighing doubt,
Make truth more clear,
Dispel some dwarfing care,
To lull some pain;
Bring to the fold again
Some lamb astray;
To brighten life for some one,
Now and here
This let me do to-day."
—*Exchange.*

GRANDPA'S CHRISTMAS PARTNERSHIP.

BY MARY D. BRINE IN HARPER'S.

They were counting their presents in Grandma's room,
While the dear old lady sat knitting away,
Exchanging with Grandpa a nod and a smile
Over the children at their play,
Counting their gifts, till Arthur asked,
As he climbed at last to his Grandpa's knee,
"Say, Grandpa, say, when you were a boy
Did you have a Santa Claus, same as we?"

"When I was a boy," said Grandpa then,
"The jolliest Christmas that ever I knew
Was the time when I went into partnership—
I, and some of my comrades too—
With kind old Santa himself, and helped
To make that Christmas a merry day
For a lonely woman who, widowed and sad,
Lived with her child not far away.

"A short half-mile from my own snug home
Lived Widow Lane and her little Bess,
And griefs and losses and sickness too,
Had filled their hearts with a sore distress,
Nobody knew them. Strangers they
In a village. Nor sought they word or aid.
But, boy-like (passing the house each day),
We fell in love with the bonny maid,

"Whose hair was golden, whose eyes were blue,
And who smiled at us as we loitered near,
And whose home, we knew, could catch no gleam
From the light of the Christmas-time so dear.
So we made a plan with a boyish zeal
That won from our elders a glad consent,
And on Christmas-eve, when the stars were bright,
We started out with a brave intent

"To act as Santa Claus' partners. So
We carried her wood and piled it high,
We filled a basket with goodies and toys,
Then homeward stole 'neath the midnight sky,
Leaving the tokens of 'peace, good-will,'
To gladden the two, who would wake next day
To a 'Merry Christmas' so unforeseen
And a share in the season for us so gay."

"Oh, what became of the little girl?"
The children cried, "and where is she now?
And what did she do when she grew big?"
"She wore white blossoms above her brow,"
Grandpa answered, "as pure as snow,
And went into partnership with me
For the sake of that Christmas long ago,
And the best of partners she's proved to be."

"But what do you do together, say,
And how are you partners, Grandpapa dear?"
Then Grandpa laughed and Grandmamma smiled,
And drew the little questioners near.
"What do we do together? Ah! well,
We spoil you little folks every day,
For grandmas and grandpas in partnership plan
To spoil all children—so people say."

AN ODD CHRISTMAS DINNER.

BY OLIVE THORNE MILLER.

Grace was happy that bright Christmas morning. Though her little sister was very ill, and they had no tree as usual, yet Santa Claus had slipped in quietly and brought her what she liked best of everything, three or four new books.

A long, delightful day she meant to have, curled up in a big blue chair in the library, reading. This pleasant picture Mamma spoiled, as Grace started off with her books after breakfast.

"My dear," she said, "I shall have to depend on you to keep the twins quiet to-day."

"Where's Mary?" said Grace, pausing with her hand on the door-knob, all the sunshine going out of her face.

"Mary had to go home to-day," said Mamma, "and you know, dear, it is a critical day with Bessie. I shall not leave her, and the house must be kept very still."

"Well; I suppose they can stay with me," said Grace rather ungraciously, adding: "Boys, bring your playthings into the library."

"But, my dear," said Mamma, hesitating, "I hate to spoil your pleasure to-day; but you know if you open a book, you will forget your charge."

"Not look at my new books!" exclaimed Grace. "Oh, I couldn't possibly help it! I won't forget."

"Grace," said her mother, gravely, "I know you too well, and it is my particular request that you do not even open one of your books to-day. I know it's hard," she went on, seeing the look in Grace's face; "but the life of your sister may be the forfeit."

"Hard!" cried Grace, hotly; "I think it's horrid!" and she rushed out of the room before her mother could say another word. She hurried into the library, flung herself into the blue chair, and burst into angry tears.

"I think it's just horrid!" she sobbed, violently. "It's bad enough to take care of those two young-ones without giving up my books!"

"But you know, Grace Houghton," said something within—"you know you'd forget them."

"What if I did for a tiny minute," she burst out in reply to her own thoughts; "they couldn't turn the house over in a minute."

"No; but they could throw down a table, as they did yesterday, suggested the monitor within; and a sudden shock, the doctor says, might kill Bessie.

"There's one good thing," said Grace suddenly, sitting up and looking fondly at the books she still held in her arms, "she didn't say I should not; she only 'requested' me not to."

"But you wouldn't disobey a request of Mamma's," was the next thought, on which Grace turned red and looked very sulky indeed.

Just then the door opened, and the two boys and a load of playthings were brought in and deposited, with the message:

"Your mother said I was to bring these to you, Miss Grace."

Well; that was not a very promising opening for Christmas morning, to be sure, and it stayed dismal for some time. Grace sat in the blue chair, very cross and sulky, and the twins, five years old and very lively, played with their toys on the floor. Every few minutes Grace had to interfere a sharp "Boys, do be still!" "Harry, stop dragging that train across the floor!" "Willie, don't climb on that table!" and so on; but in spite of these efforts, a good deal of noise was made in the room.

The fall of a chair at last fully aroused her; she sprang up—

"Grace Houghton," she said warmly. "I'm ashamed of you! do you want to never see your sister again? Do you care more for a story-book than you do for Bessie?" Resolutely she crossed the room, opened a drawer in the book-case, laid her precious books in, shut it and locked it, put the key in her pocket, and turned to the twins who had just arranged a street car with chairs, and were ready for a lively time.

"Dear! dear! what shall I do with them?" she thought, glancing out of the window as she passed it. "I must get up something quiet to amuse them, and vacantly her eyes wandered over the scene outside, the whole world covered with snow, and glittering in the warm sunshine. Something she saw gave her the idea.

"I know!" she suddenly exclaimed; "that'll do, I'm sure! Boys, let's have a Christmas party."

"When? where? Who'll we invite?" came quickly from the pair, who left their own play at once.

"We'll have it as soon as we can get ready," said Grace, lively enough now, "and we'll invite—let me see"—she hesitated, "all the Grays, and the Browns, the Big Blue, and the two Topknots and"—

"Oh, I know!" shouted Harry, "the birds!"

"Yes, the birds!" said Grace. "You see the snow has covered up everything they have to eat, and I'm sure they'll come here on the lawn where we always find them. There's one now—see him?"

"I do!" cried Willie, "a robin! he's waiting for crumbs."

"Well, now, Bobby," speaking to the bird perched on a low tree, and evidently looking at them in the window, "we'll invite you to dinner; and all the rest of the birds out there"—waving her hand toward the woods, which came quite near the house—"in about an hour. Please tell everybody to come."

"Tut! tut!" said the robin, with a flirt of his tail.

"Hear him answer you!" cried Harry, laughing.

"Peep! tut! tut! tut!" went on the robin.

"Yes; you'll have to wait till the table's set," said Grace in reply. "We'll—boys!" with a sudden thought, "we'll make them a Christmas tree! you know John got one for us, that we couldn't use because of Bessie. I'll get him to cut it off, and we'll fix it up for the birds."

"Oh, what a funny tree!" cried the boys; "what'll we put on?"

"You'll see," said Grace. "I don't know myself yet, but something they'll like! Now will you sit still as two mice while I go and see if we can have the tree?"

They both promised, but she took care to give them a new picture-book to look at while she was gone. Before they had exhausted their book she came back, and John behind her with the tree, or rather the top of it. He had sawed it off about four feet high, and fitted it into the standard made for it, so that it stood up nicely.

"Now, what shall we put on?" began Willie, tossing the book aside.

"Well, what do we give the birds?" asked Grace.

"Seeds" said Willie, "and crumbs—and—and"—

"And bones," burst in Harry.

"Yes; and meat," said Grace.

"Meat?" cried Harry.

"Why, yes! doesn't Bobby there eat worms all summer on the lawn, and ar'n't worms meat, I'd like to know?" said Grace; "and you know there's lots of little fellows eat meat. You remember little Quanky who's always going round and round, knocking at the doors and jerking out the little grubs in the trees?"

"Yes," said Harry, with wide-open eyes, "and 'Boy Blue'! Don't you 'member what a long worm he had one day? longer'n he was."

"An' 'Foxie,' 't used to jump so after grasshoppers," chimed in Willie.

These children knew so much about birds, you must know, because their mother was very fond of them, and told the boys their names, what they ate, and many things about them.

For half an hour there were three very busy pairs of feet in that house, as Grace and the boys collected their Christmas gifts; but at the end of that time everything was piled on the library table, and the work of decoration began. Little boxes made of paper were tightly tied on the branches in many places, to hold the seeds; stems of wheat and oats dried for winter bouquets were bound with thread on the ends of the twigs. Grace even added some heavy, drooping stems of rice in the shell, which Uncle Ben had brought her as a curiosity from Georgia, because she knew a certain fellow in a gray coat who especially delighted in that. Fresh raw beef that the cook good-naturedly cut from a steak was snipped with scissors into tiny strips a half-inch or more long, and not much bigger than a pin. Some of these imitation worms were wedged in among the leaves of the tree, and others tied loosely in a bundle and hung on a branch. Two bones out of the same steak were firmly fastened to the small trunk of the tree. Bunches of bitter-sweet with bright red berries were arranged among the branches. All this, though done by eager fingers, took a long time, and then Grace brought out a cupful of dried currants that had been soaking in hot water all this time. Now they were all plumped out and soft, and she set the happy and busy boys to sticking them on to the sharp, needle-like leaves of the tree.

This was a slow operation, and very droll that tree looked, I can tell you, all blossomed out with dried currants. The last thing was to fill the little boxes with hemp seed, cracked wheat, course oatmeal, canary and millet seed, and then, to their great surprise, it was time for luncheon.

When that was over John was called in, and the whole thing carefully carried out and placed on the lawn before the window, just where the birds were used to being fed. Then a dishful of water was set under the tree.

"Will they take a bath?" asked eager Harry.

"No; it's too cold," said Grace; "but they'll want a drink, you know; and now we'll sit in the window and see who comes to our party."

She placed a chair for each.

Hardly were they seated before the fun began.

"There comes Bobby!" from Willie announced the first arrival. Sure enough, a robin, perhaps the one who had been invited, alighted on a shrub beside this strange new Christmas-tree. He looked at it; he flirted his tail; he jerked his body and slapped his wings down on his side, and at last came down on the snow to see what he could make of it. He ran all around it, in little short runs, stopping and lifting his head every minute to see if anything had happened while he was not looking. He came closer, then something caught his eye—a bone! yes; he knew a beefsteak bone; he'd seen them before; he boldly pounced on the lowest branch, and attacked that bone as if he had not eaten meat in a month. He shook the tree so that some of the seeds were spilled, but that didn't matter, the birds would like them just as well from the snow.

The boys were so taken up with Bobby's performances that they had not noticed another arrival, till Grace called "chick-a-dees!" and there they were, a little flock, all in black caps and white vests as trim as dandies. They flew back and forth two or three times, then alighted on the snow around the tree, and devoted themselves to picking up what Master Bobby had scattered. Very busy and sociable they were too, chattering and eating as fast as they could and calling their thanks in lively "chick-a-dee-dee's" when they were ready to go.

"Oh, who's that?" cried the boys, as a stranger appeared on the lawn. He was dressed in a neat suit of bluish brown, and he gravely walked over the snow to see what the excitement was. He came on in a droll, little mincing way, bobbed his head at every step, and when he reached the tree he turned his funny little head up and looked at Bobby still working away at that bone, chuckling to himself as though this was the very oddest thing he had seen yet.

"That's a turtle-dove," said Grace, when she got a good sight of him; "isn't he pretty?"

"What'll he eat?" asked Bobby.

"I don't know; we'll see," said Grace. And they did; for he began to pick up the seeds from the snow in a doubtful way, as though he suspected they might be poisoned. But he did not stay long, for now came a very noisy party in rusty-black, with faded red shoulder-straps. They were only three or four, but they made noise enough for a dozen. The dove walked off with great dignity, and Bobby took flight in a hurry.

One of the new-comers said "Chack! chack!" another uttered a loud scream, and a third said "Whew!" and they all bustled around as if they hadn't a minute to stay, and had a great deal to talk about. After some little study of the tree, they pounced on it in a body, and the way the eatables disappeared in those long, black bills was alarming.

"They won't leave a thing," said Willie.

"See how they shake the things out!" said Harry.

"And look at them stuffing themselves!" added Willie; "let's scare 'em away!"

"Why, what for?" said Grace; "didn't we invite them all? These redwings don't seem to have very fine table manners; but they're having a good time anyway, and we can fill up the boxes again."

The redwings ate their fill, sang a song or two, dipped freely into the water, and then left.

For a few minutes the tree was deserted, and then came a lisping group. They alighted on the Christmas-tree without fear, they fell at once to eating of the feast they found there, and had a good deal to say about it, but never a word above a soft, hissing whisper—it was droll enough. They were very handsome in olive-colored dress with black spectacles, tall pointed caps and brilliant red tags on their wing feathers.

"Cherry birds!" the boys cried.

"Cedar birds," said Grace.

While they were enjoying their silent luncheon, another guest came in, even more silent, for the three hosts in the window did not see him till he flashed around the trunk of the little tree, and gave a long, rattling knock as though he expected a door to open and a grub to walk out.

"Oh, there's Downy!" was announced, and just that minute he caught sight of one of the bits of meat cut to look like tiny worms. He helped himself, and liked it so well that he took another, and another, and then rapped his thanks and disappeared the way he had come.

Next came down a flock of sparrows, chirping and chattering like a party of

WHAT THEY EXPECTED.

school children off on a frolic, tree sparrows with reddish caps, song sparrows with big, black neckties, fox sparrows that the boys called Foxie, white-throats with black half-mask and white bow at the throat, and all dressed in brown with streaks everywhere. They whirled around the tree as if to see it on all sides, and then settled on the ground and picked up the seeds. Then one spied the meat, and hopped up on the lowest branch, and another one did so because he did, and in about a minute they could hardly see the tree for the sparrows all over it. Oh! but they had a good time, and they said so too, in their way, chirping and talking and giving little snatches of song by way of thanks; and just as the boys began to think there wouldn't be a thing left, they all suddenly rose in a crowd, whirled once more around the tree, and were off out of sight in a minute.

The next guest alighted on the tree with a flutter, jerked his tail, which he held cocked up in the air, gave a loud call or two, then scolded all whom it might concern, and fell to eating.

"I know that's a wren; see his tail tipped up. Isn't he funny?"

"Yes," said Grace, "and there's some one who doesn't care for his scolding—see?" and she pointed to the lower part of the tree.

"Quanky! Quanky!" called the boys, and "Quank! quank!" said the little fellow, as he circled around the tree trunk and branches, till he found that food grew on the outside of this bark instead of inside where he was used to finding it. He was all in dull blue, and Grace called him a nuthatch.

All the afternoon the party of three sat inside the library window and watched the visitors to the Christmas-tree. Once or twice the boxes were all replenished, and everybody that came seemed to get his fill. There were flocks of snow-birds in black and white, with tails opening and shutting like fans; brown creepers hung head down from the twigs; a blue-bird and his little mate picked away at the bones; purple finches all in red and brown, and summer yellow-birds in russet winter suits; a pair of cardinals, fashionably late, ate their fill of the rice, sitting in one place and dropping the shells all over the snow. Last of all, after everybody else had taken his Christmas present and gone, and the boys were beginning to be tired and wonder if supper wasn't ready, there arrived the oddest of all their guests. He was a big fellow all in blue and white and black, and he came around in the most wary fashion.

"See the blue jay!" said Grace, and the boys were at once interested. He was a long time making up his mind that the tree was not a new sort of trap. He went around it in long hops, turning his wise-looking head this way and that, and giving droll little hops up, if anything moved. But when he was satisfied it was all right he hopped to the lower branches and proceeded to have a good time in his own way. Some things he ate, but more he threw down; he seemed to regard it as his business to clear the table. Seed boxes were hammered off, currants—what few were left that he didn't eat—he filled his mouth with, flew down and hid them under one corner of the standard; the empty wheat stalks he pulled off, likewise the bunches of bitter-sweet, from which the berries were eaten.

"Oh, he'll pull everything off!" cried the boys.

"Well, what if he does?" cried Grace; "the birds can eat from the snow, and he's so busy and funny I like to see him."

So they watched him a long time, for he had a pretty big job. You see he not only wanted to clear the tree completely, but his ardent wish was to carry off and hide every grain of rice, and every loose seed. He had to give it up though, for night came on quickly, as it does on Christmas Day, you know. While they watched him Mamma came in and told them that the crisis was over and Bessie would get well.

"And what lovely boys you have been!" she added, as she took one in each arm and went out to supper. "And as for you, Grace," she said warmly, "it has been the most useful day of your life—if it was a hard one."

"It wasn't hard," said Grace, honestly, "only at first. It's been a lovely day, Mamma."

"An' we've had a Christmas party, an' lots of folks came to it," broke in the boys together.

"To-morrow you shall tell me all about it," said Mamma.—*N. Y. Independent.*

[For the *Northern Messenger.*]

MISSIONARY WORK IN THE HOME.

Not long ago I visited the Home for Incurables. The very name incurable has a sad sound, and one would naturally think it must be a sad home where all but the nurses and attendants have been pronounced incurable; but you will be surprised when I tell you it is not at all sad, but the people look as happy there as the most perfect human being you ever saw. Do you ask how they can be so happy when they have to suffer so much? Let me take you to the chapel on a Sunday afternoon where all who are able to be out of bed have gathered to hear the Word of God, and to sing his praises. As I looked around the room at the happy faces and beheld the sweet smile of patience and hope on the countenances of every one, I felt they were not only hearing the Word but it was firmly fixed in their hearts. Many were in wheel-chairs which must evermore be feet for them till they reach the other shore. Childhood, youth and old age were all represented there, with forms unlike our ideal, perhaps, but with hearts it would be hard to make our ideal approach. I would like to introduce each lovely, patient face to you; the beautiful young lady with an angel face who can have but the use of her head and the precious senses it contains, but who makes you feel how good God is every time you look at her. The dear old lady, eighty years of age, who has lain on her back for fifteen years, but you forget it when you hear her sunny laugh and see her beholding a loving Master's hand in everything. Two dear Quaker ladies, patient and lovable as the rest. There were a number of children there and three little girls came in from the street, walked up to a dear little crippled fellow, printed loving kisses on his cheeks and he took them with a very happy face to his own room. This is but an incomplete illustration of the public homes in our land, and the missionary spirit which reigns there and gives these poor deformed sufferers the comforts of a home life. From these thoughts my mind turned to "incurables" in many of our private homes, homes where no one but father and mother and children dwell.

I was thinking of a home many miles away where a little true sisterly affection and sympathy might lift a dark cloud from the life of one in the home; one who has not, perhaps, as bright intellect as the rest, but whose heart is ever open to the wants of others; whose ear is never deaf to the needs of parents or brothers or sisters; who takes what falls to her lot silently and without a murmur. It is the home of Christian parents and children, and if you were to tell them they were unkind to the one strange lamb they would deny it and say, "It is only Mary's peculiar way. She does not care to go out with us, nor to study music or to go away to college." Perhaps, but I remember how joyously she left her work and accompanied me to a neighbor's one afternoon. How bright and attentive she was during our conversation though she said little. How, when we were gathered in the parlor evenings, she listened to our music as though she not only enjoyed it but appreciated it. It has been seven years since I saw her, but I often think of her and wonder if the eyes about her have been opened. If not, oh, think of the long years of acute suffering she has endured!

You who may have any one in your home who may be like her, who may be painfully quiet and reserved, who may seem to care more for domestic duties than anything else, do not leave them entirely to it because, "Oh, she is happier there." Join her, or him as the case may be, in her likes and make her interested in yours. In so many homes we find some one we might make much happier if we would make their joys ours and vice versa. A brother is there who does not seem to care for his sister's society or for home and so wanders forth. Have you ever tried to bring him through thousands of sisterly ways to care for your society, my sister? Mother, have you given him his own room and made it as attractive as your daughter's? Placing little tokens here and there, keeping it always neat and clean, a place where he may be alone to read or write, or to entertain his friends? If he cannot have brightness and comfort and sympathy at home where will he find it? He must have it, it is a part of human nature, and he will go outside for it. But we know that though it may seem all that to his untutored eye, the attraction and affection a young boy meets with outside of home often cover a pit of disgrace and shame into which he may some day fall.

Oh, mother and sister, stop ere it be too late; ere you realize your neglect of duty by the side of the grave which covers all that might have been your hope and pride had not true motherly and sisterly sympathy been wanting; had you realized that there was real missionary work in your own home to be done.—*May Brooks.*

BOOKS AND MONEY FOR *MESSENGER* READERS.

AND PICTURES, TOO,—HOW THEY MAY BE OBTAINED.

Any one who collects ten cents in payment of a *bona fide* new subscription of the *Northern Messenger* for three months may send us the address with five cents and the *Northern Messenger* will be duly sent for the time mentioned, the object being to get the paper into a new family.

Anyone who collects twenty cents in payment of the subscription of a *bona fide* new subscriber to the *Weekly Witness* for three months may send us the address with ten cents, and the *Weekly Witness* will be duly sent to such address for the time mentioned, the object being to get the paper into a new family.

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12. The King's Daughter.
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19. The Man of the House.
20. Ruth Erskine's Crosses.
21. Household Puzzles.
22. Those Boys.
23. Modern Prophets.
24. The Randolphs.
25. Mrs. Solomon Smith Looking On.
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27. A New Graft on the Family Tree.

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Any subscriber to the *Messenger* who sends in with his renewal subscription one new one, each at thirty cents, will receive one of the Pansy stories; for five cents extra the new subscriber will also receive a book. Each story is in an illuminated paper cover and well illustrated. The names of these stories that may be selected are as follows:—

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WISE AND OTHERWISE.
FOUR GIRLS AT CHAUTAUQUA.
THE CHAUTAUQUA GIRLS AT HOME.
THREE PEOPLE.
AN ENDLESS CHAIN.
ESTER REID.
ESTHER REID YET SPEAKING.
RUTH ERSKINE'S CROSSES.

One of these books will be sent to each subscriber whose name is sent by an old one with thirty-five cents, so that if an old subscriber sends eight subscriptions with his own and $3.10, each subscriber, in addition to having the *Messenger* for a year, will have one of these popular stories, and they can be exchanged among the circle until each one has read all. *The Pansy books cannot be sent to the States.*

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Any subscriber to the *Messenger* who sends in with his renewal subscription that of a new one, each at 30 cents, will receive his choice of any one of the following four noble pictures. If he sends in one new subscription with his own, at 30 cents each, and ten cents in addition, making 70 cents, he will receive any two of these beautiful large pictures:

"THE ANGELUS," by Jean Francois Millet.
"SCOTTISH CATTLE RAID," by Rosa Bonheur.
"THE HORSE FAIR," by Rosa Bonheur.
"CHRIST BEFORE PILATE," by Michael Von Munkacsy.

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light;
The year is dying in the night:
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind;
For those that here we see no more;
Ring out the feuds of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,
And ancient forms of party strife;
Ring in the nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
The faithless coldness of the times;
Ring out, ring out my mournful hymns,
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,
The civic slander and the spite;
Ring in the love of truth and right,
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease;
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

TENNYSON.

A DAY AT BETHLEHEM.

BY REV. THEODORE L. CUYLER, D.D.

There is one day in every year when the eye of Christendom is turned toward the bright little town which stands on the hill-top about five miles south of Jerusalem. No one visits Palestine without visiting Bethlehem. There is but one turnpike road in the Holy Land; it leads from Jaffa to Jerusalem, but there is a respectable bridle-road down to Bethlehem, and it is not made difficult by either rocks or hills. With a pleasant party of friends, (one from Australia and another from a mission field in India,) I set off on a bright morning in May to the little city of David. We halted at the tomb of Rachel by the road-side, and beside it an old woman was weeping as violently as if the beautiful first-born of Jacob had been her own daughter. Then we made a detour to the West and rode to the Pools of Solomon. A wonderful relic of antiquity are these solid stone tanks, the longest of which measures five hundred and eighty feet. Standing on the stone rim of the principal pool and looking southward we saw nothing but a series of wild, rough, rocky, treeless, grassless hills—a perfect picture of desolation. It is hard to realize that those black barren hills were once terraced and clothed with verdure. It is one of the startling disappointments to find that so much of Palestine is to-day as utterly desolate as the summit of Mount Washington.

Our ride to Solomon's Pools had brought us to the south-west of Bethlehem, and we turned our horses thither, riding along the side of an aqueduct which looked like a small mill-race. It conveys the water from the lower pool to Bethlehem and Jerusalem. Down at my left, in the deep ravine —or "Wady"—or Urtas were a few acres of rich garden, bright with fig-trees, vines and flowers, a sort of oasis amid the desolation. It is cultivated by a European colony originally planted there by one Meshullam. As we drew near to Bethlehem we encountered olive groves and barley-fields almost ripe for the harvest. Women were in the fields at work—wearing the same dress that charming Ruth wore when she gleaned after the reapers of Boaz. One could understand just how the industrious damsel made a sort of sack out of the bosom of the loose dress, in which she carried home to her mother-in-law the "ephah of barley."

Bethlehem stands on the eastern end of an elevated ridge, about a mile long, and rising 2,600 feet above the level of the Mediterranean. From its walls you get a superb view towards the East, across the fertile valley and beyond to the bleak desert of Engadi which overhangs the Dead Sea. Bethlehem and Jerusalem are among the three or four towns in Palestine which are actually growing; although the whole country can only boast a single carriage road, a single telegraph line, and not a single newspaper. The Bethlehemites are mostly Christians; some of them Romanists, a few are Protestants, but the majority belong to the Greek Church. An industrious Yankee-like community they are too—manufacturing various articles out of olive-wood and mother-of-pearl, in which they drive a brisk traffic. It is said that they carried back $100,000 from the Centennial Exhibition at Philadelphia. So many new edifices have been erected for convents and other sacred uses that the town has a very fresh, modern aspect.

Yet in this hallowed town—which dates back beyond the boyhood of King David—stands the oldest Christian church-edifice on the globe! A portion of the "Church of the Nativity," is claimed to have been standing in the days of Constantine, fifteen centuries ago, and we walked among the venerable columns with a sense of awe that is inspired by no other Christian structure in existence. It was old when Mohammed was a baby, and already venerable when Charlemagne wore his iron crown. A well-fed monk from the adjoining Latin Convent took us down the stairway into a subterranean chamber or vault thirty-three feet long and about a dozen feet in width. The walls are of marble and it is blazing with lamps which are continually burning night and day. In the floor stands a large silver star. Around it is the Latin inscription which in English reads: "Here Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary." Dr. Geikie tells us that when he first laid his eyes on the sacred spot, he could not keep back the tears: and many another devout soul has been as deeply moved as he.

Is that glittering compound of white marble and flaming lamps a pious sham? Yes; as far as the marble manger and the splendid decorations are concerned. They are the mere mockery of priestcraft. But on that very spot, or within a very few yards of it, the marvellous event of the nativity of the Saviour of sinners actually took place! There God first became "manifest in the flesh." The most careful and cultured archæologists are coming to admit that about on this spot once stood an ancient Khan that once belonged to the family of King David. There is every probability that the "stable" in which the poor Hebrew mother found shelter, and in which the infant Jesus saw the light, was a cave or cellar beneath a Khan. A tradition which goes back to the early centuries has identified this subterranean chamber with the birth of Christ. While Jerusalem has been torn to ruins and built over and over again a dozen times, Bethlehem has never been destroyed and devastated by military sieges. No place in Palestine has suffered so little from violence or Vandalism. But the strongest argument for the genuineness of the site is found in the fact that the great Latin scholar St. Jerome came here about the year 400. He spent the best part of his laborious life in the cavern close by; and there produced his Latin version of the Scripture called the Vulgate. St. Jerome strongly believed that our Lord's nativity took place in that subterranean chamber, and this fact ought to carry prodigious weight. Nor is there any other spot that has ever competed with it, and no claim has ever been made in behalf of any other. Dr. Geikie only expresses the judgment of others when he declares that "there is no good reason to doubt that in this case the great event associated with it actually took place."

We know that the feet of our Blessed Lord once trod the rocky knoll above Nazareth, and the soil beside Jacob's well at Sychar, and the old Roman road that leads from Bethany into Jerusalem. Of these three localities we are fairly certain. It is coming to be acknowledged by the best authorities, that the scene of the crucifixion was that skull shaped elevation north of the Damascus gate. Let us rejoice to believe that we also can sing a joyful Christmas hymn in the very town over which hung the "Star of Bethlehem," and approximately on the spot where the Virgin Mother "brought forth her first-born son," while the air above was vocal with the music of the angels.

ON THE MERRY HILLSIDE.

AN OUTLET WANTED.

Boys and girls are often spoiled by parental gloom. The father never unbends. The mother's rheumatism hurts so she does not see how little Maggie can ever laugh. Childish curiosity is denounced as impertinence. The parlor is a parliament, and everything in everlasting order. Balls and tops in that house are a nuisance, and the pap that the boy is expected to relish is geometry, a little sweetened with the chalk of blackboards. For cheerful reading the father would recommend "Young's Night Thoughts" and Hervey's "Meditations among the Tombs." At the first chance the boy will break loose. With one grand leap he will clear the catechism. He will burst away into all riotous living. He will be so glad to get out of Egypt that he will jump into the Red Sea. The hardest colts to catch are those that have a long while been locked up. Restraints are necessary, but there must be some outlet. Too high a dam will overflow all the meadows.—*Talmage.*

THE BIRD'S CHRISTMAS CAROL.

BY KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN.

CHAPTER IV.—*(Continued.)*

"Now I'm going to give this whole Christmas to the Ruggleses. And, Uncle Jack, I earned part of the money myself."

"You, my bird; how?"

"Well, you see, it could not be my own, own Christmas if Papa gave me all the money, and I thought to really keep Christ's birthday I ought to do something of my very own; and so I talked with Mamma. Of course she thought of something lovely; she always does; Mamma's head is just brimming over with lovely thoughts, and all I have to do is ask, and out pops the very one I want. This thought was, to let her write down, just as I told her, a description of how a little girl lived in her own room three years, and what she did to amuse herself; and we sent it to a magazine and got twenty-five dollars for it. Just think!"

"Well, well," cried Uncle Jack, "my little girl a real author! And what are you going to do with this wonderful 'own' money of yours?"

"I shall give the nine Ruggleses a grand Christmas dinner here in this very room—that will be Papa's contribution, and afterwards a beautiful Christmas tree, fairly blooming with presents—that will be my part; for I have another way of adding to my twenty-five dollars, so that I can buy everything I like. I should like it very much if you would sit at the head of the table, Uncle Jack, for nobody could ever be frightened of you, you dearest, dearest, dearest thing that ever was! Mamma is going to help us, but Papa and the boys are going to eat together down stairs for fear of making the little Ruggleses shy; and after we've had a merry time with the tree we can open my window and all listen together to the music at the evening church service, if it comes before the children go. I have written a letter to the organist, and asked him if I might have the two songs I like best. Will you see if it is all right?"

"BIRDS' NEST, Dec. 21st, 183—.

DEAR MR. WILKIE,—I am the little sick girl who lives next door to the church, and, as I seldom go out, the music of practice days and Sundays is one of my greatest pleasures.

I want to know if you can let the boys sing 'Carol, brothers, carol,' on Christmas night, and if the one who sings 'My ain countree' so beautifully may please sing that too. I think it is the loveliest song in the world, but it always makes me cry; doesn't it you?

If it isn't too much trouble, I hope they can sing them both quite early, as after ten o'clock I may be asleep.—Yours respectfully,

CAROL BIRD.

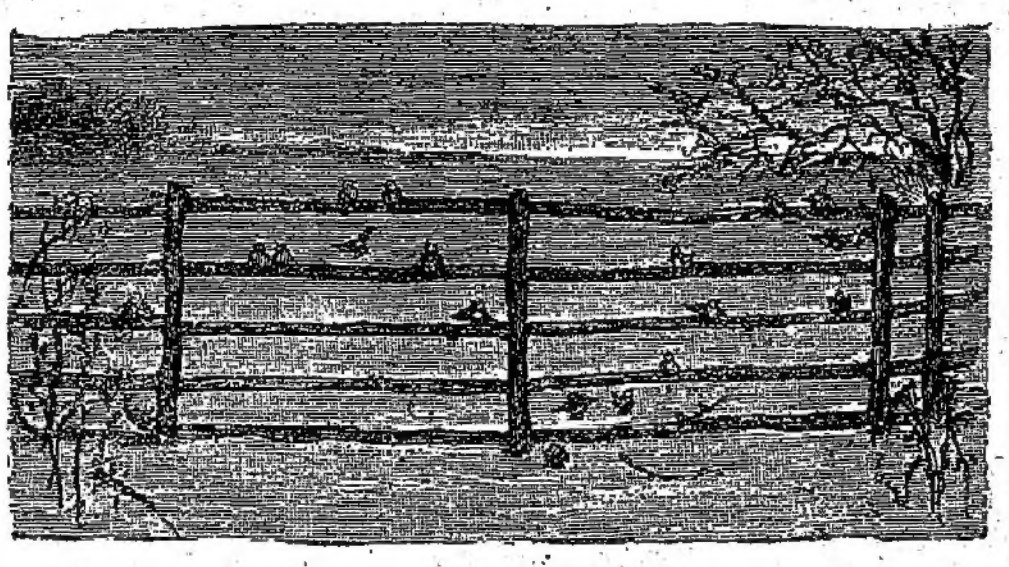
P.S.—The reason I like 'Carol, brothers, carol,' is because the choir-boys sang it eleven years ago, the morning I was born, and put it into Mamma's head to call me Carol. She didn't remember then that my other name would be Bird, because she was half asleep, and couldn't think of but one thing at a time. Donald says if I had been born on the Fourth of July they would have named me 'Independence,' or if on the twenty-second of February, 'Georgina,' or even 'Cherry,' like Cherry in Martin Chuzzlewit; but I like my own name and birthday best.—Yours truly,

CAROL BIRD."

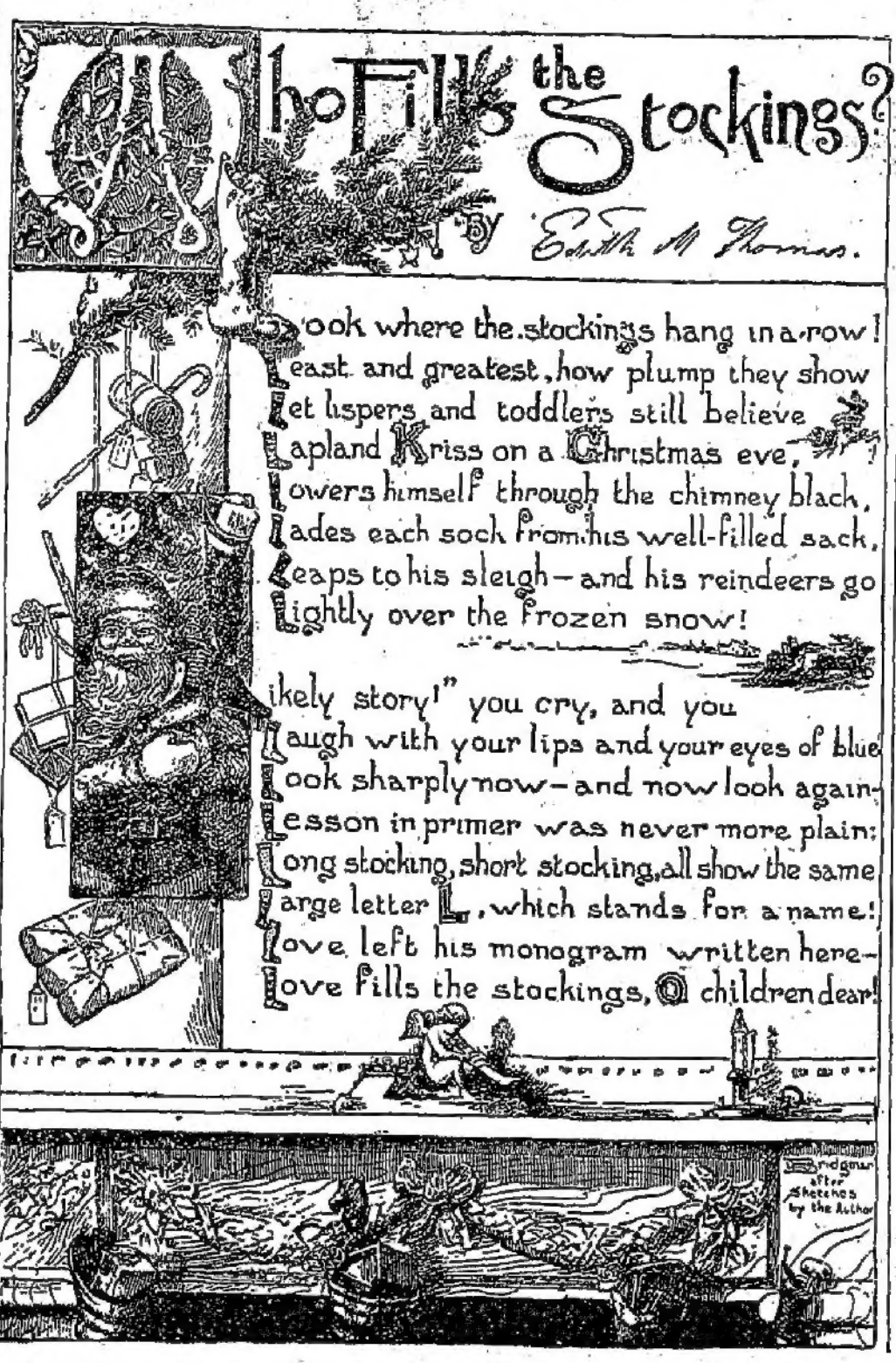
Uncle Jack thought the letter quite right, and did not even smile at her telling the organist so many family items. The days flew by, as they always fly in holiday time, and it was Christmas eve before anybody knew it. The family festival was quiet and very pleasant, but quite swallowed up in the grander preparations for next day. Carol and Elfrida, her pretty German nurse, had ransacked books, and introduced so many plans, and plays, and customs and merry-makings from Germany, and Holland, and England and a dozen other places, that you would scarcely have known how or where you were keeping Christmas. The dog and the cat had enjoyed their celebration under Carol's direction. Each had a tiny table with a lighted candle in the centre, and a bit of Bologna sausage placed very near it and everybody laughed till the tears stood in their eyes to see Villikins and Dinah struggle to nibble the sausages, and at the same time evade the candle flame. Villikins barked, and sniffed, and howled in impatience, and after many vain attempts succeeded in dragging off the prize, though he singed his nose in doing it. Dinah, meanwhile, watched him placidly, her delicate nostrils quivering with expectation, and, after all excitement had subsided, walked with dignity to the table, her beautiful gray satin trail sweeping behind her, and, calmly putting up one velvet paw, drew the sausage gently down, and walked out of the room without "turning a hair," so to speak. Elfrida had scattered handfuls of seeds over the snow in the garden, that the wild birds might have a comfortable breakfast next morning, and had stuffed bundles of dried grasses in the fireplaces, so that the reindeer of Santa Claus could refresh themselves after their long gallops across country. This was really only done for fun, but it pleased Carol.

And when, after dinner, the whole family had gone to church to see the Christmas decorations, Carol limped wearily out on her little crutches, and, with Elfrida's help, placed all the family boots in a row in the upper hall. That was to keep the dear ones from quarrelling all through the year. There were Papa's stout top boots; Mamma's pretty buttoned shoes next; then Uncle Jack's, Donald's, Paul's and Hugh's; and at the end of the line her own little white worsted slippers. Last, and sweetest of all, like the little children in Austria, she put a lighted candle in her window to guide the dear Christ-child, lest he should stumble in the dark night as he passed up the deserted street. This done, she dropped into bed, a rather tired, but very happy Christmas fairy.

(To be Continued.)



A CHRISTMAS CAROL.


Who Fills the Stockings?
By Edith M Thomas.
Look where the stockings hang in a row!
Fast and greatest, how plump they show
Yet lispers and toddlers still believe
Lapland Kriss on a Christmas eve,
Lowers himself through the chimney black,
Lades each sock from his well-filled sack,
Leaps to his sleigh—and his reindeers go
Lightly over the frozen snow!
Likely story!" you cry, and you
Laugh with your lips and your eyes of blue
Look sharply now—and now look again—
Lesson in primer was never more plain:
Long stocking, short stocking, all show the same
Large letter L, which stands for a name!
Love left his monogram written here—
Love fills the stockings, O children dear!
Bridgman after Sketches by the Author

CHRISTMAS IN THE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL.

Come, listen, you little children,
Healthy, happy and gay.
Listen! I'll tell you something,
Something for Christmas Day.

Do you know there are many children
In this broad land of ours,
Shut away from the blessed sunshine—
Do you know it, you human flowers?

Shut into the tall bare houses,
The sick, the sad, the lame,
Dear little suff'ring children,
For whom the Christ-Child came.

Four little maidens know it—
Rose, Kitty, Susie, and May,
And gave to those other children,
Some joy on a Christmas Day.

Kitty was black-eyed and fearless,
While Rose was calm and fair;
Susie had eyes of hazel,
May, softly curling hair.

Now when these four little maidens
Learned of those children sad,
Long ere the dawn of Christmas,
They planned to make them glad.

They talked and planned together,
For money there was none—
Money to buy for the children,
All of their very own.

So Kitty ran many an errand,
With willing, nimble feet,
And May, who had been so careless,
Was all the days so neat,

Brushing the tiresome curls of hair,
Thick on the graceful head,
Picking up hat and satchel,
Making her own little bed,

Rose sewed long seams for grandma,
Pricking the patient hands;
Susie cared for the baby sister,
Answering her least demands.

And for these things they got money—
These things so hard to do,
All through the days of summer,
And all through the autumn too.

For piles of cards the brightest,
All of May's money went;
For the prettiest, choicest candies,
Little Kitty's all was spent.

Rose bought things for the little girls,
Dainty and pleasing toys,
And all of Susie's treasure,
Was spent for the little boys.

Oh! such a big, big bundle
They sent to one building tall;
I wish they could have followed it
Inside of the barren wall,

Where they lay that Christmas morning,
On their beds so clean and white,
Those rows of little children,
A sorrowful, sorrowful sight!

Some were to lie there weary months,
Stretched on those beds of pain,
Some soon to go out in the sunshine
Strong and well again.

Some to go out crippled, maimed,
Maimed for the rest of life—
Life such a weary struggle,
And hardly worth the strife,

And some to go out only
With the falling of the breath,
In the arms of the beautiful Angel,
The Angel whom we call Death.

How beamed the sad little faces,
How the fading eyes grew bright,
As the weak hands grasped the treasures
And strove to hold them tight!

And all through the day they were happy,
Each suffering little one,
All through the day till nightfall,
And after the set of sun.

When night and darkness were o'er them,
Some lay with their treasures still
Hugged to their hearts in slumber,
A slumber pain could not kill.

And one who lay through weary hours,
Racked with the fiercest pain,
Looked into the face of a dolly,
Who smiled right back again.

Another, when dawned the morning,
Lay still in his little bed,
Clasped in his waxen fingers
A beautiful card which said—

The words set in finest blossoms—
"Suffer the Children to come."
And so the poor little baby
Holding it, had gone home.

Sweet work for these little maidens!
Cannot we do the same,
For the dear little suffering children
For whom the Christ-Child came?

—*Emily Baker Smalle.*

SINCERITY is like travelling on a plain, beaten road, which commonly brings a man sooner to his journey's end than by-ways, in which men often lose themselves.—*Tillotson.*

HE WHO RECEIVES but does not give is like the Dead Sea. All the fresh floods of Jordan cannot sweeten its dead, salt depths. So all the streams of God's bounty cannot sweeten a heart that has no outlet; is ever receiving, yet never full and overflowing.—*Josiah Strong.*

"THE RUGGLESES NEVER FORGOT IT."

THE BIRD'S CHRISTMAS CAROL.

BY KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN.

V.—Some Other Birds Are Taught To Fly.

Before the earliest Ruggles could wake and toot his five-cent tin horn, Mrs. Ruggles was up and stirring about the house, for it was a gala day in the family. Gala day! I should think so! Were not her nine "childern" invited to a dinner-party at the great house, and weren't they going to sit down free and equal with the mightiest in the land? She had been preparing for this grand occasion ever since the receipt of the invitation, which, by the way, had been speedily enshrined in an old photograph frame and hung under the looking-glass in the most prominent place in the kitchen, where it stared the occasional visitor directly in the eye, and made him pale with envy:

"Bird's Nest, Dec. 17th, 18—.

Dear Mrs. Ruggles,—I am going to have a dinner-party on Christmas day, and would like to have all your children come. I want them every one, please, from Sarah Maud to Baby Larry. Mamma says dinner will be at half-past five, and the Christmas tree at seven; so you may expect them home at nine o'clock. Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. I am, yours truly,

Carol Bird."

Breakfast was on the table promptly at seven o'clock, and there was very little of it, too; for it was an excellent day for short rations, though Mrs. Ruggles heaved a sigh as she reflected that even the boys, with their India-rubber stomachs, would be just as hungry the day after the dinner-party as if they had never had any at all.

As soon as the scanty meal was over, she announced the plan of the campaign: "Now Susan, you an' Kitty wash up the dishes; an' Peter, can't you spread up the beds, so't I can git ter cuttin' out Larry's new suit? I ain't satisfied with his close, an' I thought in the night of a way to make him a dress out of my old plaid shawl—kind o' Scotch style, yer know. You other boys clear out from under foot! Clem, you and Con hop into bed with Larry while I wash yer underflannins; 'twont take long to dry 'em. Sarah Maud, I think 'twould be perfeckly han'som if you ripped them brass buttons off yer uncle's policeman's coat an' sewed 'em in a row up the front o' yer green skirt. Susan, you must iron out yours an' Kitty's apruns; and there, I came mighty near forgettin' Peory's stockin's! I counted the whole lot last night when I was washin' of 'em, an' there ain't but nineteen anyhow yer fix 'em, an' no nine pairs mates nohow; an' I ain't goin' ter have my childern wear odd stockin's to a dinner-company, brought up as I was! Eily, can't you run out and ask Mis' Cullen ter lend me a pair o' stockin's for Peory, an' tell her if she will, Peory'll give Jim half her candy when she gets home. Won't yer, Peory?"

Peoria was young and greedy, and thought the remedy so much worse than the disease that she set up a deafening howl at the projected bargain—a howl so rebellious and so out of all season that her mother started in her direction with flashing eye and uplifted hand; but she let it fall suddenly, saying, "No, I won't lick yo Christmas day, if yer drive me crazy; but speak up smart, now, 'n say whether yer'd ruther give Tim Cullen half yer candy or go bare-legged ter the party?" The matter being put so plainly, Peoria collected her faculties, dried her tears and chose the lesser evil, Clem having hastened the decision by an affectionate wink, that meant he'd go halves with her on his candy.

"That's a lady;" cried her mother. "Now, you young ones that ain't doin' nothin', play all yer want ter before noon-time, for after ye git through eatin' at twelve o'clock me 'n Sarah Maud's goin' ter give yer such a washin' an' combin' an' dressin' as yer never had before an' never will agin, an' then I'm goin' to set yer down an' give yer two solid hours trainin' in manners; an' 'twont be no foolin' neither."

"All we've got ter do's to eat!" grumbled Peter.

"Well, that's enough," responded his mother; "there's more 'n one way of eatin', let me tell yer, an' you've got a heap ter learn about it, Peter Ruggles. Land sakes, I wish you children could see the way I was fetched up to eat—never took a meal o' vittles in the kitchen before I married Ruggles; but yer can't keep up that style with nine young ones 'n yer Pa always off ter sea."

The big Ruggleses worked so well, and the little Ruggleses kept from "under foot" so successfully, that by one o'clock nine complete toilets were laid out in solemn grandeur on the beds. I say, "complete;" but I do not know whether they would be called so in the best society. The law of compensation had been well applied; he that had necktie had no cuffs; she that had sash had no handkerchief, and vice versa; but they all had boots and a certain amount of clothing, such as it was, the outside layer being in every case quite above criticism.

"Now, Sarah Maud," said Mrs. Ruggles, her face shining with excitement, "everything is red up an' we can begin. I've got a boiler 'n a kettle 'n a pot o' hot water. Peter, you go into the back bedroom, an' I'll take Susan, Kitty, Peory an' Cornelius; an' Sarah Maud, you take Clem, n' Eily, n' Larry, one to a time, an' git as fur as you can with 'em, an' then I'll finish 'em off while you do yerself."

Sarah Maud couldn't have scrubbed with any more decision and force if she had been doing floors, and the little Ruggleses bore it bravely, not from natural heroism, but for the joy that was set before them. Not being satisfied, however, with the "tone" of their complexions, she wound up operations by applying a little Bristol brick from the knife-board, which served as the proverbial "last straw," from under which the little Ruggleses issued rather red and raw and out of temper. When the clock struck three they were all clothed, and most of them in their right minds, ready for those last touches that always take the most time. Kitty's red hair was curled in thirty-four ringlets, Sarah Maud's was braided in one pig-tail, and Susan's and Eily's in two braids apiece, while Peoria's resisted all advances in the shape of hair oils and stuck out straight on all sides, like that of the Circassian girl of the circus—so Clem said; and he was sent into the bed-room for it too, from whence he was dragged out forgivingly by Peoria herself, five minutes later. Then—exciting moment—came linen collars for some and neckties and bows for others, and Eureka! the Ruggleses were dressed. A row of seats was formed directly through the middle of the kitchen. There were not quite chairs enough for ten, since the family had rarely all wanted to sit down at once, somebody always being out, or in bed, but the wood box and the coal-hod finished out the line nicely. The children took their places according to age, Sarah Maud at the head and Larry on the coal-hod, and Mrs. Ruggles seated herself in front, surveying them proudly as she wiped the sweat of honest toil from her brow.

(To be Continued.)

CHRISTMAS WAITS.

The children sing a carol clear,
On early Christmas morn,
Because it is the day on which
Our Saviour, Christ was born.

The wondrous story o'er they tell,
Of the dear Saviour's birth,
Of how the angels came to say
That peace should reign on earth.

Of how the wise men travelled far
The infant Christ to see,
In the poor manger where he lay
Upon his mother's knee.

And so, at break of Christmas day,
They sing their carol sweet,
And ask a Christmas blessing
From everyone they meet.

CHRISTMAS WAITS.

BOYS' AND GIRLS' STORIES.

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE BOYS AND GIRLS OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF CANADA AND NEWFOUNDLAND.

NOVEMBER 20TH, 1889.

DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,

We have been told that you enjoyed the DOMINION PRIZE COMPETITION, carried out by the Montreal *Witness* newspaper, very much, and that you are anxious for another one this year. The *Witness* was well satisfied with the results also, and its Publishers have decided to accede to this very general demand, and therefore ask you to read very carefully what follows:—

THE PRIZES.

We offer a series of seven sets of prizes:—

I.—A SCHOOL PRIZE to the writer of the best true story of an event that took place wholly or *partly in the county* in which the school is. This prize will be awarded by the teacher or any examiner he may appoint; or, if none can be found, by the *Editor of the Witness*. This school prize will be a copy of the *Northern Messenger* for a year. Last year 653 school prizes were awarded; this year we hope to award 5,000 at the very least.

II.—A COUNTY PRIZE to the writer of the best true story of an event that has happened wholly or partly in the county in which the school attended by the writer is. If the School Prize *Winner* secures a County Prize, the Editor of the *Witness* will select another story from that school, whose author will obtain the School Prize. The County Prize will be a copy of Lighthall's "Songs of the Great Dominion," the newest and best collection of Canadian poetry yet published, sold at $1.25.

III.—A PROVINCE PRIZE for the best story selected from amongst the County Prize Stories in each Province. The winner of the Province Prize will not also obtain the County Prize for his county, but that will be given for the second best story in the county, which will also be awarded by the Province Judge. The Province Prize will be a copy of either Webster's or Worcester's Dictionary, as may hereafter be selected. For the purpose of this competition Ontario will be divided into two portions, the east and the west, and a Judge will be selected for, and a Province Prize given to, each. Newfoundland will rank as a Province.

IV.—THE CANADA PRIZE.—This will be for the best story selected from amongst the Province Prizes. The second best story from the Province securing this prize will obtain the Province Prize. Last year the Dominion Prize Judge was the Right Hon. the Marquis of Lorne.

We have written to Lord Lorne, who expressed so deep an interest in the last competition, asking him to be the Judge for this one. The Canada Prize will be a Bell Piano, price $500.

V.—A "RECOGNITION" BADGE.—This year, as last, every competitor will receive a "Recognition" Badge or Book Mark, which will express the fact that the recipient was a competitor.

VI.—FIFTY PRIZES FOR SCHOOLS of a framed portrait of Her Majesty the Queen, to be hung up in the winning schools. This will be for the school which shows the best general results, neatness, good handwriting, number of stories, and all similar points being considered. These fifty prizes will be divided amongst the Provinces in *proportion to the number of stories sent in from each*, and will be awarded by the Province Judges.

VII.—A copy of the *Daily* or *Weekly Witness* will be sent for a year to the winner of the Canada, Province and County Prizes. This paper will contain many of the stories and much to interest competitors during the year. If a copy already goes to the residence of the winner, the subscription term will be extended for a year.

RECAPITULATION.

1 Canada Prize—A BELL PIANO, price $500.
9 Province Prizes, worth $12 each.
206 County Prizes (each city to be classed as a county.)
A School Prize to each Competing School.
A Recognition Badge to every Competitor.
50 Prizes to Schools with best general showing as to number and character of Stories.
The total Value of these Prizes is about $3,000.

THE CONDITIONS.

The stories must all be in the handwriting of the scholar; they must be true, or well-authenticated tradition; they must have happened wholly or partially in the county in which the narrator resides, except in cases where he resides in one county and attends school in another, when he shall have the privilege of choosing either as the scene of his story; no story should be longer than 2,000 words—the shorter the better; each story shall be certified by the teacher of the school as to the best of his belief, true or well-authenticated tradition, and that it is in the handwriting of the sender; the teacher shall also state, as far as he can in general terms, the assistance obtained by the writer; the writers may obtain the foundation for their stories from friends or from books, but must not be mere copyists, and in case of obtaining help from books, must give their authority, with edition, volume and page.

THE DATE.

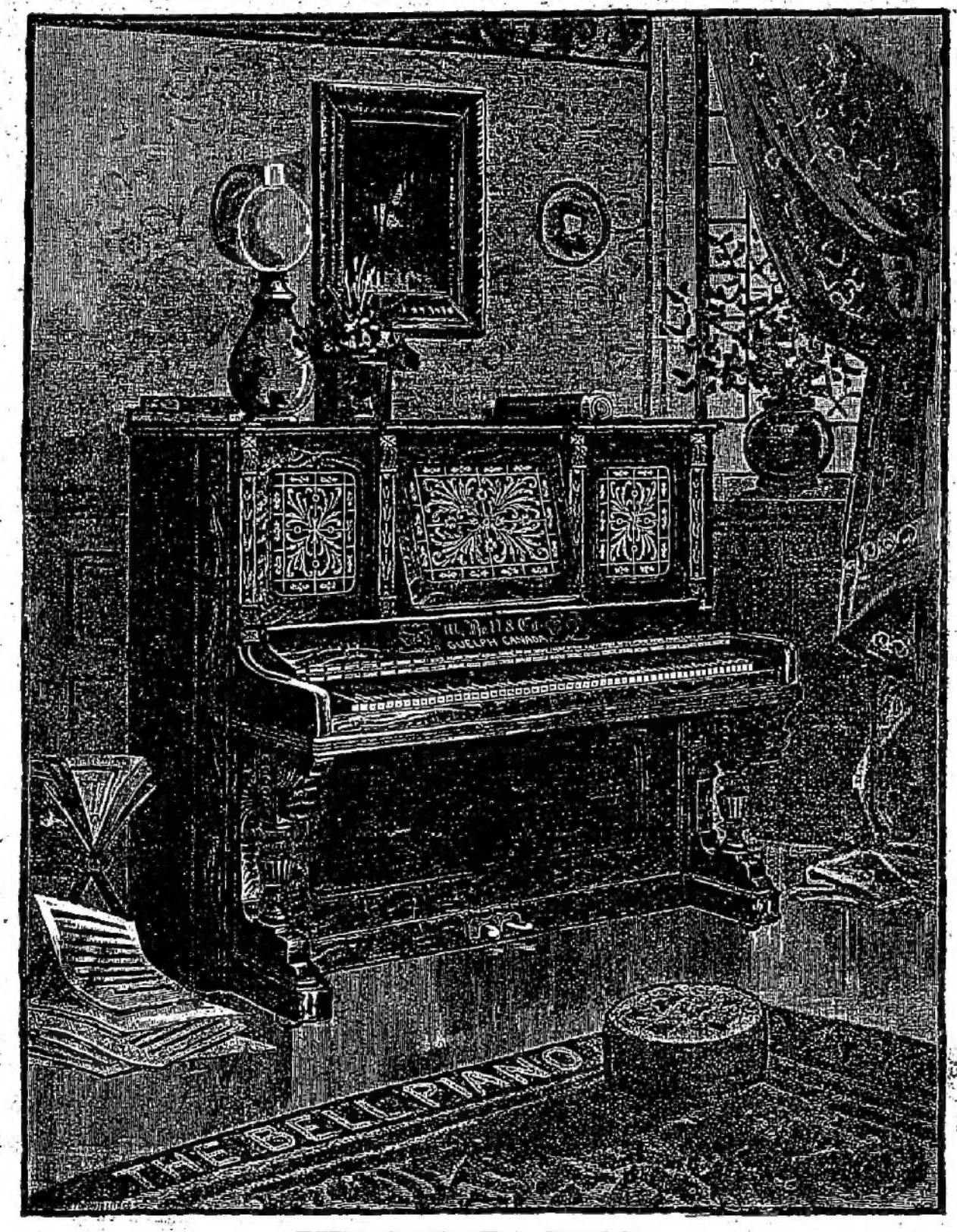
The stories must all be mailed on or before February 28th, 1890, and the prizes, if possible, will all be forwarded in time to be distributed publicly before the midsummer holidays.

THE JUDGES.

Last year the Judges were:—

DOMINION.—The Right Hon. the Marquis of Lorne, P.C., G.C.M.G., K.T.

NEWFOUNDLAND, MANITOBA AND N.W.T., AND BRITISH COLUMBIA.—S. E. Dawson, Esq., Montreal.



THE CANADA PRIZE.

NOVA SCOTIA.—Dr. J. Hall, Provincial Normal School, Truro.

NEW BRUNSWICK.—A. A. Stockton, Esq., D.C.L., LL.D., St. John.

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND.—Mr. Justice Alley, Judge of the County Court of Queen's County, Charlottetown.

QUEBEC.—Dr. J. M. Harper, Inspector of Superior Schools, Quebec.

ONTARIO.—Wm. Houston, Esq., M.A., Parliamentary Librarian.

We are writing to ask these gentlemen to act as Judges again, with this difference, that their constituences be changed, with the exception of Mr. Dawson, who resides a thousand miles or more from the *nearest of the provinces* under his charge, and who requires to be close at hand to make up for the time in reaching the distant provinces to the east and west. We propose to request Mr. Houston to judge for New Brunswick, and Dr. Hall for Western Ontario; the Judge selected to represent Nova Scotia is while Dr. Stockton will be requested to judge for Eastern Ontario; Dr. Harper to take Prince Edward Island, and Judge Alley, Quebec.

The reason for this contemplated change is not that there have been any complaints against *the judgments* last year, the whole number received being two, but that there will be greater freshness to the Judges, who may be able also to give some valuable hints from comparison with those of the previous year, and from looking on them from the point of view of one in a far away province.

GENERAL REMARKS.

The stories are to be written on one side of the paper only, the paper used to be a quarter sheet of foolscap, that is, six and a half inches deep by eight inches and a quarter broad. The sheets should be numbered and placed in order, and a back-sheet added, which will be sent from this office on receipt of two one-cent stamps. This sheet will contain ten short directions for preparing manuscript *for the press*, a blank teacher's certificate, and a form for endorsation. For the two one-cent stamps a sufficient number will be sent to supply any school. The story must then be folded over so as to be eight and a quarter inches long by three and a quarter broad, and enclosed in the backing-sheet, which must be endorsed with the name of the story, name of the writer, the school, county, P.O. address, and age of the writer, name of teacher and teacher's address. The blank teacher's certificate should be filled out and *be signed* by the teacher. The name and P.O. address of the writer should be signed at the bottom of each story.

The whole of the stories received during the last competition have been applied for, and will find a resting-place in the archives of the *Historical Society of Toronto University*; and those you are asked to contribute will find an equally honorable position, *not one* of them being lost. The size prescribed and the margins left will enable them to be neatly bound and preserved for years, as a memento of what the Canadian school boys and girls did in 1889 and 1890. It will be an interesting thing for our young readers in after years to look up their stories.

And now we ask our young friends to enter with enthusiasm into this competition. They will find that their parents and friends will give them all the assistance they can to obtain records of events which have been nearly forgotten. The *Witness* now each week contains several stories which were sent in during the last competition, which may suggest to them incidents that may not have been previously looked upon as of *sufficient interest* to publish.

We respectfully request you and the teachers of every school to do your utmost to make a record in this competition. Some of the most interesting stories, although not the most correct in style, have been written by very young scholars. We want them all, no matter how youthful they may appear.

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(Canada Competition.)

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JOHN DOUGALL & SON,
Publishers,
Montreal, Que.

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